
MIAMI DADE COUNTY

2004 GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND PROGRAM

TOWN HALL MEETINGS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

RESULTS SUMMARY

In the fall of 2003 on the instructions of the Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County, in an effort to address its infrastructure and capital improvement needs, embarked on preparations for a new General Obligation Bond. In order to gather public input and support, the County initiated a variety of activities. Given the level of public impact that bond programs have, and the various capital and infrastructure needs across the county, County staff opted to utilize town hall meetings as a one method of gathering public input on the bond, associated project areas, and potential issues or concerns. In December 2003 MGT of America, Inc., was retained by the County to assist with facilitation of the citizen town hall meetings.

This report summarizes the primary results of the 47 town hall meetings¹ conducted through April 12, 2004. The town hall meetings were intended to educate the public about the proposed bond offering, assess the level of public support for the program, and determine priorities for consideration by the County Commission. In order to summarize our findings in each of the town hall meeting areas, this report:

- Documents the major trends found in sessions throughout the county;
- Identifies differences in preferences across the commission districts; and
- Makes recommendations for the successful endorsement of the bond program.

The report is organized to provide a comprehensive picture of the process, results, and significant outcomes.

Town Hall Meeting Process

County staff, in conjunction with MGT, designed the town hall meeting format in December 2003. Although the County selected locations and scheduled the meetings, MGT staff proposed the protocol for the town hall meetings and made recommendations on the conceptual structure to be used for data collection. This structure changed during the project, at the request of various County staff, but the conceptual foundation remained fairly consistent. Careful attention was given throughout the project to ensure direct linkage to the County's strategic plan and its strategic themes, goals and objectives that were also developed with significant public input.

¹ In addition to the town hall meetings the County held more than 50 other public meetings with business and civic groups as part of its public outreach efforts. In total the County has held more than 100 public meetings. This report, however, provides only information gathered from the facilitated town hall meetings and survey responses.

The facilitated session consisted of the following components:

- *Introduction to the General Bond Obligation Bond Program* – in this portion of the session MGT educated the audience on bond programs, the importance of a 2004 bond offering, and its role in benefiting the County as a whole.
- *Discussion of Attendee's Background* – this section included general questions geared toward assessing the composition of the audience.
- *Assessment of the Level of Support for the Proposed Bond Program* – MGT asked several questions to assess the level of initial support for the Bond Program based on the educational information provided.
- *Collection of Priority Areas for the Bond Program* – the majority of each meeting dealt with assessing the needs, interests, and desires of the attendees in regards to the use of funds from the General Obligation Bond.

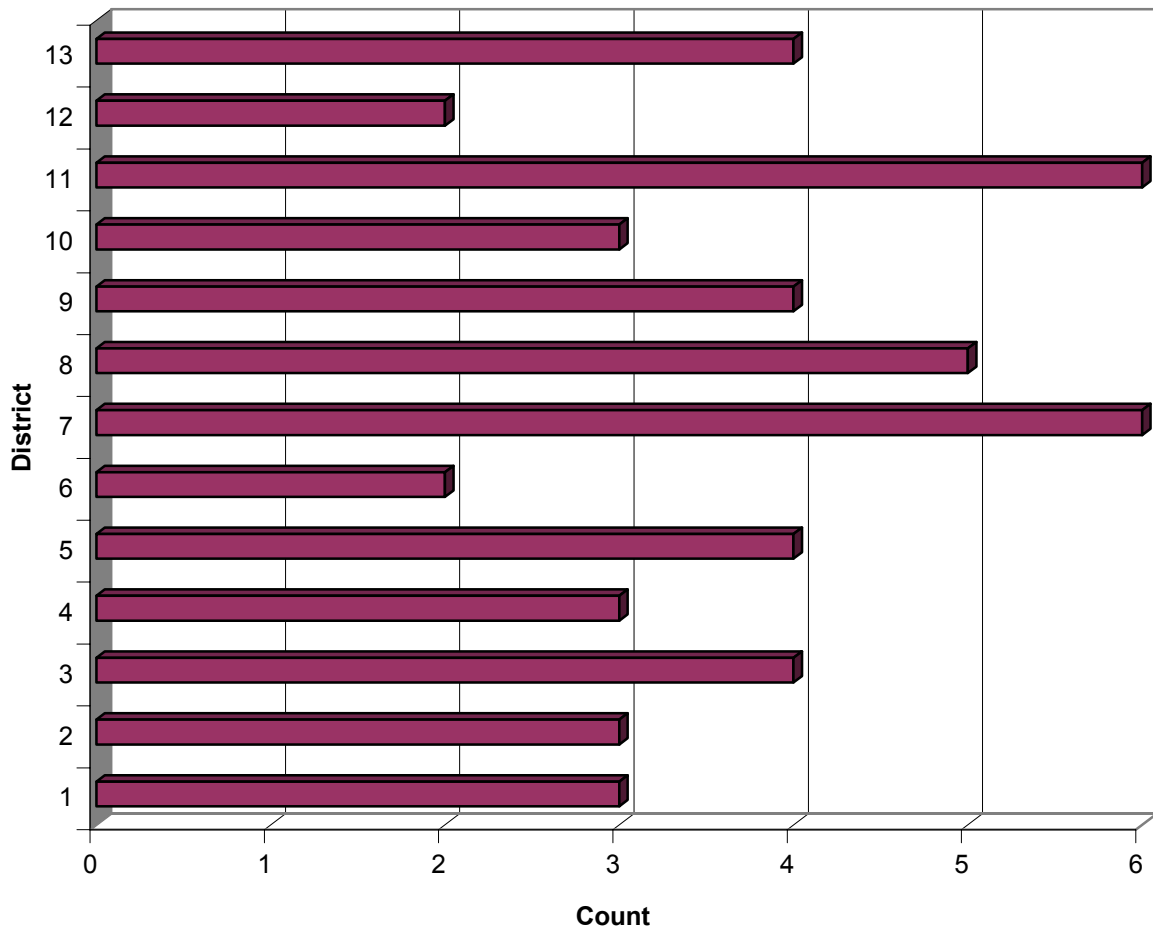
The information collected from the sessions was organized by project areas to reflect the County's capital needs and the broad spectrum of County services. The categories utilized for organizing feedback are shown in Exhibit 1 below:

**EXHIBIT 1
PROJECT AREAS**

PROJECT AREA
Preserving Our Resources
Enjoying Arts, Culture and Recreation
Accessing Services
Keeping the Community Safe
Neighborhood Improvements
Creating and Retaining Jobs
Sustaining a Healthy Community

Attendance at the meetings varied between a few citizens to over 100 attendees. Attendance patterns varied from high levels of attendance in the beginning of the process to declining attendance as the sessions went on. In total, approximately 1,250 Miami-Dade County residents attended town hall meetings. However, the actual number of residents reached through public meetings likely was much larger, given that the format of several meetings precluded attendance being taken, and at many meetings some residents did not sign the attendance sheets. The sessions by Commission District appear below in Exhibit 2.

**EXHIBIT 2
COMPLETED TOWN HALL MEETINGS BY DISTRICT**



This exhibit depicts a total of 49 sessions, though only 47 actual sessions were held. The numerical difference is due to two meetings that served community areas encompassing more than one district. All districts had at least two meetings.

In addition to the feedback given during the facilitated sessions, a general preference survey was developed to serve as an individual level measurement tool for the areas of public interest. The survey was posted on the County website and distributed to the attendees at the town hall meetings. In addition, copies were made available at county facilities. As of April 30, 2004, 174 surveys were received. Based on discussions with the County team, the results are combined with the town hall meeting results and are included in the findings section.

Results from the survey and the town hall sessions were provided to the County team on a weekly basis. The report format highlighted the level of support for the bond program and the specific projects that were of interest to the most attendees.

Results

In order to maximize the utility of the information gathered, this section is divided into two sub-sections. The sub-sections include overall support and overall findings.

Overall Support

Each of the 47 town hall meetings began with a discussion of the bond program and the merits of acting under the current financial conditions. After completing the introduction, the attendees were asked if they felt that they could support the referendum. Taking into account all of the town hall meetings, the level of support was approximately 75 percent. Some variation existed across meetings, but the overall public sentiment was very supportive. The only real exceptions were in Coral Gables and Northwest Miami-Dade (District 1), where many of the negative responses related to disillusionment with the County.

When meeting attendees were asked what conditions would lead to higher or continued support, the most frequent responses included:

- Understanding how the program would be coordinated with the municipalities;
- Receiving strong assurances that the benefits of the program would be fairly distributed; and
- Ensuring that public input would be taken seriously in the project determination phase of the bond program.

These were the top three issues at approximately 80 percent of the town hall meetings.

Overall Findings

Given the emphasis on project type over the actual project, the overall findings include some general preferences and some findings that can only be defined as more locally based priorities. When determining the applicability of the inclusion of the preference in the overall summary of findings, MGT staff combined locally based priorities into general types to the greatest extent possible.

In order to gauge resident support for project areas, residents were asked to vote at the conclusion of each meeting for their top three priority areas. Project areas were then ranked by the number of residents citing the area as a priority, with highest receiving the most citizen support, and lowest receiving the least citizen support. The results are shown in Exhibit 3. The level of support captured the number of attendees supporting the project area based on a vote taken at each meeting to identify the most important areas for action.

It should be noted that, though valuable information was gathered through this process, the results should not be interpreted as quantitative data. Rather, the process was designed to collect qualitative information and provide the County with a basic gauge of resident support for project areas and particular projects. Additionally, some County

residents attended several meetings to advocate for inclusion of particular projects. As such, the priority rankings also include those residents who voted at multiple meetings.

**EXHIBIT 3
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA**

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Keeping the Community Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Create a Juvenile Court facility and Juvenile Assessment Center.■ Create new jail facilities.■ Create new victim service centers.■ Create Homeland Security Center.■ Construct additional marine patrol offices throughout County.■ Increase street lighting and signage.■ Improve and increase number of police substations.■ Increase number of fire stations.■ Improve and increase number of animal service facilities and shelters throughout the County that include spay/neuter facilities for large pets.■ Create a 24-hour emergency clinic for pets.■ Provide funding for mounted police facilities in local parks.■ Expand 911 facilities and establish emergency call centers.■ Create emergency evacuation shelters that allow pets.■ Improve crime labs.■ Create an agriculture patrol facility.■ Renovate TGK and Stockade.■ Create Veteran's Resource Center.■ Create alternative group housing for youth.■ Purchase facilities for ex-offenders transitioning back into society.	Medium

**EXHIBIT 3 (Continued)
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA**

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Preserving our Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase land acquisition for open space creation. ■ Purchase Development Rights for watersheds, wetlands, open spaces and agricultural land. ■ Contain growth through boundaries. ■ Assist small municipalities with areas that are still on septic systems to move them into the 21st century ■ Acquire and preserve environmentally sensitive lands. ■ Improve quality of the Bay. ■ Improve the water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure. ■ Revitalize beaches. ■ Develop Greenways Paths. ■ Increase the tree canopy. ■ Support CERP program via land acquisition. ■ Supplement the EEL program. ■ Improve/expand water and sewage treatment plants. ■ Preserve historic properties. ■ Provide assistance for improvements to national parks. ■ Develop parks along urban boundaries. 	High
Sustaining a Healthy Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase the Jackson satellite facilities to increase accessibility to health services. ■ Expand and improve the Jackson main campus. ■ Increase access to neighborhood clinics. ■ Increase the number of public health facilities and satellite health care centers (especially multipurpose health centers). ■ Increase public and affordable housing and homeownership. ■ Increase the number of youth and young adult counseling centers. ■ Create childcare centers. 	Medium

**EXHIBIT 3 (Continued)
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA**

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Sustaining a Healthy Community <i>(cont'd)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create facilities for maternal and prenatal care services. ■ Create senior citizen housing with health services and recreation. ■ Create facilities for the homeless population that include mental health services. ■ Support CHI expansion. ■ Create integrated children's center. ■ Create mental health facilities throughout the County. ■ Implement mobile units for health services. ■ Create HIV-education and care centers. ■ Implement Asbestos water pipe mitigation. ■ Create trauma center in South Dade. ■ Create therapeutic and vocational center for disabled children. ■ Build a new, larger facility for Victim Services Center. ■ Create small urgent care centers. ■ Create boarding homes for low-income patients. ■ Grant funding for senior rehab projects. 	Medium
Enjoying Arts, Culture & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Revive Marine Stadium. ■ Create and expand dog parks. ■ Purchase Freedom Tower. ■ Increase the performing arts venues to draw more interest to Miami. ■ Expand, fix and redesign parks. ■ Consider providing performing arts venues at parks. ■ Create or revamp public transportation system to access parks and museums (similar to trolley system). ■ Establish more regional arts/cultural centers. ■ Increase historic preservation. 	Highest

**EXHIBIT 3 (Continued)
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA**

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
<p>Enjoying Arts, Culture & Recreation <i>(cont'd)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add community pools. ■ Create lighted sports facilities for adults and children. ■ Improve archery facility adjacent to Camp Owaissa Bauer. ■ Complete South Miami Heights Stadium. ■ Create a visitors' center that focuses on National Parks. ■ Expand Fruit & Spice Park to become natural arts education facility. ■ Fund New World Symphony campus expansion on Miami Beach. ■ Expand Miami Beach Convention Center. ■ Improve Coconut Grove Playhouse. ■ Expand Caleb Center to include an African American Heritage Cultural Center with recording studio. ■ Complete equestrian center. ■ Create senior and handicap recreational center. ■ Create a skate park. ■ Create animal sanctuary. ■ Purchase Homestead Amphitheater. ■ Create recreational facilities west of U.S. Route 1. ■ Develop Wild Lime Park and Virginia Key Beach Park. ■ Create an ATV park in South Miami-Dade County. ■ Expand Trail Glades firing range. ■ Renovate Tower Theater. ■ Create more libraries. ■ Create band shell for Michael Krop Park. ■ Create countywide architectural database. ■ Repair existing marinas, boat ramps and bay walks, and make them accessible to the public. ■ Provide studios for artists. 	<p align="center">Highest</p>

**EXHIBIT 3 (Continued)
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA**

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Enjoying Arts, Culture & Recreation <i>(cont'd)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create recreational corridor on Julia Tuttle Causeway. ■ Develop North Shore library, theater, and live arts facility. ■ Develop aquarium, maritime museum and botanical garden in waterfront vicinity. 	Highest
Accessing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create transportation access to and from service facilities. ■ Implement transportation improvements not included in Peoples Transportation Plan. ■ Create hazardous waste collection facilities in South Dade. ■ Expand and create new trash and recycle centers. ■ Create satellite spay and neuter centers. ■ Create shelters for exotic and large farm animals. ■ Continue the e-government initiative. ■ Create adequate parking when building facilities to be able to access services. ■ Create and expand multigenerational community centers and senior centers throughout the County. ■ Create new satellite court facilities. ■ Upgrade technology in existing community centers. ■ Create community technology centers. ■ Create facility for Cooperative Extension Service in North Dade with a rotating agent. ■ Implement mobile neighborhood service centers. ■ Build workforce center for indigenous residents in Model City/Liberty City area. ■ Create and expand regional government centers, particularly in North, West and South Dade. ■ Renovate Caleb Center. 	Lowest

EXHIBIT 3 (Continued)
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Accessing Services (<i>cont'd</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create transportation hub (Park & Ride), especially from Haulover to the airport. ■ Contribute funds to the STS fleet. ■ Provide computer access at parks (similar to access at libraries). ■ Create multigenerational civic centers. 	Lowest
Neighborhood Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Better synchronization of traffic lights-an automated system. ■ Reduce congestion at key intersections. ■ Create and/or improve by-paths or water launches. ■ Improve bike paths throughout the County. ■ Develop a city trail system for hiking, biking, and walking. ■ Expand underground sidewalks. ■ Improve current and create new sidewalks, especially to be wheelchair accessible. ■ Advance funding via Public Works to complete development of roads when community developers do not. ■ Institute traffic-calming measures. ■ Implement noise pollution measures. ■ Increase neighborhood traffic and trash transfer station signage, especially bilingual signage. ■ Create more trash transfer sites. ■ Acquire land for parking garages related to the light rail system. ■ Fortify decaying neighborhood infrastructures. ■ Improve local bridges. ■ Expand water, sewer, and stormwater drainage capacity where needed and create master plan for underground utilities. ■ Elevate bus ways. ■ Replace sidewalk flags. 	High

**EXHIBIT 3 (Continued)
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA**

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Neighborhood Improvements <i>(cont'd)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement neighborhood and roadway beautification projects. ■ Improve access for Zoo area. ■ Provide incentives for developers to invest in infill areas. ■ Add benches throughout County. ■ Implement street flow improvements. 	High
Creating and Retaining Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Purchase old Holiday Inn on 80th and NW 7th Ave. to create community business and technology center. ■ Increase parking along 7th Ave. corridor to assist with business development. ■ Create a monitoring system for building community equity. ■ Develop a skills training center near Metrorail station. ■ Create center to assist senior citizens with job placement. ■ Create an incubator for the arts. ■ Provide development assistance for the FTAA. ■ Subsidize existing apartments to make them more accessible for new tenants. ■ PDRs for agricultural land. ■ Provide tax and development incentives for the redevelopment of the Country Club of Miami shopping center. ■ Expand the Zoo system. ■ Develop the Marine Industrial Overlay on 27th Avenue. ■ Provide pedestrian access from the Metrorail Station at Palmetto Expressway and 74th Street. ■ Develop bilingual job centers. ■ Embrace “live/work” concept when placing new facilities. ■ Provide seed money for Cutler Ridge Business Improvement District. ■ Invest in Animal Control Service Centers. 	Low

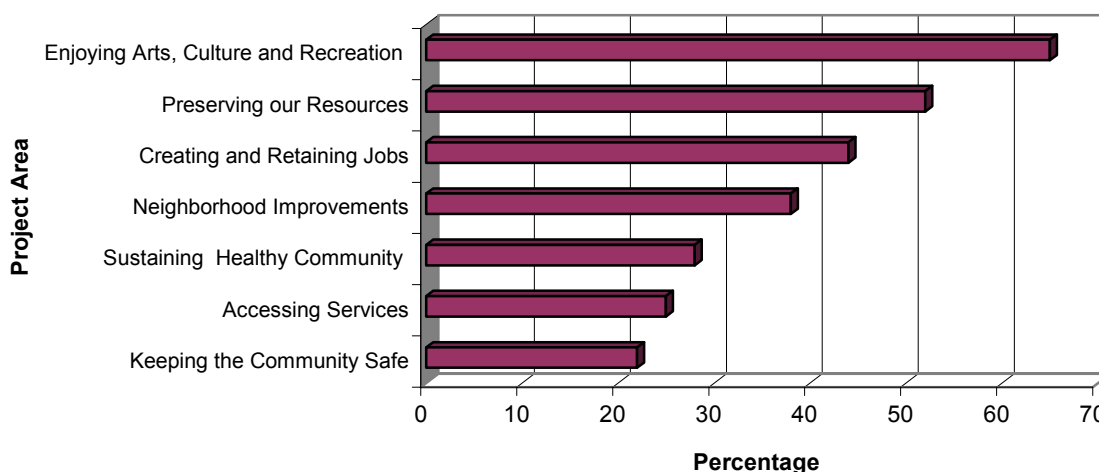
**EXHIBIT 3 (Continued)
FINDINGS BY PROJECT AREA**

PROJECT AREA	FACILITY TYPES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Creating and Retaining Jobs (<i>cont'd</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop business center similar to Brickell and Downtown area. ■ Provide incentives for redevelopment and revitalization of South Miami. ■ Put new infrastructure in existing commercial areas and with adjacent transportation systems. 	Low

The overall findings reveal that Enjoying Arts, Culture, and Recreation is the project area that is most often referred to and the area that receives the strongest support. A high level of support is present for Preserving Our Resources, and Neighborhood Improvements. However, attendees considered Preserving Our Resources, Sustaining a Healthy Community, Creating and Retaining Jobs, and Neighborhood Improvements as the next highest priorities.

When considering the citizen surveys separate from the town hall meetings, the results are similar. Exhibit 4 summarizes the level of support for each of the project areas based on resident priorities identified in the completed surveys. Enjoying Arts, Culture, and Recreation is the most frequently supported response. Almost 70 percent of the respondents ranked it as a priority.

**EXHIBIT 4
PERCENTAGE OF SURVEY RESPONSES SUPPORTING
EACH PROJECT AREA AS A PRIORITY AREA**



Significant Outcomes

Based on the results, significant outcomes have come out of this process. The most important outcomes include:

- Strong and consistent support among town hall meeting attendees exists for the bond program. Overall, citizens feel that the bond would help the County and provided much needed improvements.
- At each level of analysis, the highest priority was Enjoying Arts, Culture, and Recreation. Considerable pride existed among the attendees over the commitment that has been made in this area in the past. Those communities with facilities desired expansion and those without desired the addition of facilities. In a large number of cases, there was strong interest in assuring that the County worked with local municipalities to coordinate these efforts.
- Preserving Our Resources occupied the second priority position in most meetings. In District 3, it was the highest priority. Clearly, there is a strong commitment to quality of life and the environment.
- As in most communities and areas, there seems to be much stronger association with services that people recognize as direct County services and those used most often.
- Neighborhood Improvements grew in support over the town hall meeting process. Strong support came from a public interest in dealing with the pressures associated with growth; whether it be water, sewer, transportation, or recreationally based.
- Creating and Retaining Jobs was an area that became more important in the later meetings. The primary predictor of support seemed to be attendee composition. As a result, it was listed as a priority in a number of meetings but did not have the overwhelming support of some other project areas.
- The strongest concern on the part of the attendees arose from simple trust in the County to be fair to their community and to follow its own plan. Much of the distrust is tied to a perception of past County failures to follow through on plans and to ensure that some form of equity of treatment was practiced.
